Our academic lives are simultaneously intensely local and profusely global. It is hardly surprising that our research extends over a vast international space. This issue’s reports take us from the Turkish-Syrian borderland through the Caucasus and across Iran—a land where we hope that the future will bring renewed scholarly activity in the wake of improved relations. Inevitably, this work takes our faculty to distant places, so that my morning email finds Sören Stark composing a course syllabus in Samarkand and Robert Hoyland planning his participation in an exam from Saudi Arabia.

But ISAW is as much, and essentially, local, with our seminars, lectures, conferences, and more informal conversations over coffee and lunch. The new crop of graduate students and visiting scholars, introduced in the pages that follow, renew and diversify the net of intellectual exchange that makes our community such an exciting place to work in.

The duality of our nature is perfectly captured in this fall’s exhibition (see pages 8-9), in which ancient ideas of space and their later reverberations are beautifully explored. The exhibition is very local—you really must see these objects in person!—and yet globally accessible through its electronic incarnation (if that is not an oxymoron). Still more, the electronic resources now available for ancient geography, above all our own Pleiades (see page 7), are both encompassing and globally used. The exhibition reminds us, too, that ancient cyclical ideas of history may have something to be said for them, with procedural approaches to space and mapping, dear to the ancients, resurgent in our own time—however horrifying this may be to those of us who love two-dimensional mapping of a post-Renaissance kind.

As always, we welcome you to our exhibition and lectures, and we hope that you can be part of the ISAW community in various ways.

Roger S. Bagnall
Leon Levy Director
The Peter Jay Sharp Foundation Gives Grant for the Leon Levy Lecture

Shelby White

ISAW is pleased to announce that the Peter Jay Sharp Foundation has made a generous grant to endow the annual Leon Levy Lecture at ISAW. This gift has been matched by the Leon Levy Foundation. Peter Sharp, a long time Manhattan resident, was a hotelier, who among other properties owned the Carlyle Hotel. He was also a major collector of old master paintings and drawings, with a magnificent private library designed by legendary Italian decorator Mongiardino. He was an accomplished pianist, who frequently played with the Colorado String Quartet. He and Leon Levy were friends and long time business partners. When Norman Peck, president of The Peter Jay Sharp Foundation, heard about the annual lecture, he thought this would be a fitting way for the Foundation to honor Leon Levy.

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Incoming Graduate Students

David Danzig
After studying Physics and Mathematics as an undergraduate student (B.A., Yeshiva University), I turned to investigating ancient historical and cultural ideas. I spent time studying the Hebrew Bible (M.A., Yeshiva University), focusing on linguistic and historical/archaeological issues, and then Assyriology at Yale University (M.A.). My academic goal is to apply contemporary theoretical and methodological frameworks (historical critical, anthropological, archaeological, literary, cognitive scientific, etc.) to the integration of multiple modes of ancient evidence (literary, archaeological, environmental, art historical, etc.) in order to achieve new syntheses regarding historical-cultural problems of the Ancient World, concentrating on Ancient Mesopotamia and its neighboring environs.

Andrea Trameri
I received my B.A. in Classics and Oriental Studies in 2009 and my M.A. in Ancient Near Eastern Studies in 2012 at the University of Pavia, Italy. In my M.A. thesis I examined a critical edition of a Hittite ritual text of Hurro-Hittite tradition related to the religion of the Netherworld. My research interest is in Anatolian philology and Hittite studies, in particular related to the complex cultural and religious background of Anatolia within the network of Ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean traditions. In addition to the philological studies, since 2011 I have worked in the archaeological field for the NYU and Pavia University excavations at Kınık Höyük in Turkey (Cappadocia). At ISAW I intend to further investigate the features of Hittite religion in the context of ancient Mediterranean cultural background and pursue my work and study in the archaeological field.

Shujing Wang
I received my B.A. degrees in archaeology and in philosophy from Peking University, China. I am interested in the archaeology and cultural communication between China and the world through the Silk Road in antiquity. In my undergraduate thesis and other projects, I tried to reconstruct the interaction and transmission of cultural factors through the Silk Road based on the analysis of archaeological materials with their context, especially focusing on the cultural exchanges in the east of Eurasia from 500 BC to 200 AD. At ISAW, I intend to further my previous study and specifically research the process of cultural communication between ancient China and Central Asia. Through this I hope to reveal the patterns of cultural diffusion along the Silk Road and find the specific influencing factors that created the differences between them.

Visiting Research Scholars

Emily Hammer
Ph.D., Harvard University
Research Interest: Near Eastern Archaeology

Daniel Fleming
Professor of Hebrew & Judaic Studies, NYU
Research Interest: Ancient Near Eastern History

Adam Schwartz
Ph.D., University of Chicago
Research Interest: Ancient China

Thelma Thomas
Associate Professor of Fine Arts, Institute of Fine Arts, NYU
Research Interest: Late Antique and Byzantine Art

Liangren Zhang
Professor, School of Cultural Heritage, Northwest University, China
Research Interest: Chinese Archaeology

Matteo Compareti
Ph.D., Università di Napoli “L’Orientale”
Research Interest: Art and Archaeology of pre-Islamic Iran and Central Asia

Francesca Rochberg
Professor of Near Eastern Studies, University of California, Berkeley
Research Interest: Assyriology and the History of Science

Anna Lanaro
Ph.D., Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz
Research Interest: Archaeology and History of the Mediterranean Region, 2nd millennium BCE

Ian Rutherford
Professor, Classics Department, University of Reading
Research Interest: Ancient Greek and Anatolian Religion
In Memory of Joan Goodnick Westenholz

(1943-2013), VRS 2010-11

D.T. Potts

In the autumn of 1980, just a few months after receiving my Ph.D., I was appointed Visiting Lecturer at the Institute of Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology, as it then was, at the University of Copenhagen. On the other side of town was the Institute of Assyriology, where a quartet of distinguished scholars were based: Jørgen Larsen, Mogens Trolle Larsen, Bent Alster and Aage Westenholz. Unbeknownst to me Aage had an American wife, Joan Goodnick Westenholz, and what with my frequent visits to the Assyriology library, it did not take long before we met.

My wife Hildy and I lived in a furnished sub-let in deepest, darkest Vanløse, not one of Copenhagen’s choicest suburbs. Aage and Joan invited us to their apartment for a meal and we were immediately embraced by a loving family with two bright, talkative Danish-American daughters. Joan’s welcome and empathy were palpable. She truly warmed us in that cold Danish winter. In later years, I ran into her frequently at the Rencontre Assyriologique, the annual summer gathering of Assyriologists and Near Eastern archaeologists. When I saw Joan at Ben Gurion University of the Negev in Beer-Sheva, where I delivered the annual Irene Levi-Sala Lectures in 1998, she greeted me with her distinctive smile and twinkling eyes. Joan was a scholar of whom I can say without hesitation, that every work of hers that I ever consulted had elucidated the problem I was researching better than almost anything else written on the topic. Her scholarship is a model of clarity, thoroughness, and sophistication and will influence generations of scholars to come. This is the mark of a truly great scholar. But above all, she was a warm and lovely person, deeply appreciated by all who knew her.

Digital Programs

Tom Elliott

Associate Director for Digital Programs and Senior Research Scholar

This summer, ISAW’s digital programs team continued to advance our goal of using digital techniques to better connect the ISAW community and audience to the prerequisites and results of research efforts on the ancient world.

In collaboration with Drew University in New Jersey, we conducted the second of two “Linked Ancient World Data Institutes” funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. As in May 2012, this event assembled an international group of invited scholars who create digital resources for the study of the ancient world. The institute consisted of three days of intense collaboration and learning, focusing on the use of the world wide web for scholarly communication and data exchange. A volume of papers by participants in both years’ sessions is in preparation, under the editorship of Prof. Sebastian Heath.

In October, ISAW welcomed the leadership of the Pelagios project (Southampton, Open University, and Austrian Institute of Technology) to New York for two days of meetings on the future of digital gazetteer services for ancient studies. The Pelagios team, now funded by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, has long collaborated with ISAW’s Pleiades digital gazetteer project (http://pleiades.stoa.org), promoting its use as a standard reference framework for ancient geography online. We were joined for this meeting by representatives of the China Geographic Information System (Harvard), the great Britain Historical GIS (Portsmouth), the Collaborative for Historical Information and Analysis (Pittsburgh), the Topotime Model and Layout for Historical PlaceTime (Stanford), and Wikidata Finland/Wikimaps. The participants adopted a subset of the data format originally developed for Pleiades to use as an “interconnection format” that will make it possible to begin building a seamless network of digital gazetteers, spanning Eurasia and North Africa.

We also recently released an update to the Ancient World Linked Data Javascript, a free and open-source software library that enhances the display of links to ancient world resources on any web page (http://isawywu.github.io/awld-js/). The update improves the pop-up display of content from Pleiades and adds new pop-ups for entries in the GeoNames geographical database. It is now possible to achieve a uniform presentation of ancient and modern geographic references on a single web page. See, for example, the “Checklist of Objects on Display” from the website of ISAW’s current exhibition: http://isaw.nyu.edu/exhibitions/space/checklist.html.
Measuring and Mapping Space: Geographic Knowledge in Greco-Roman Antiquity
Roberta Casagrande-Kim, Guest Curator
Tom Elliott, Associate Director for Digital Programs
October 4, 2013 – January 5, 2014

How ancient societies understood and visualized the world, from their immediate surroundings to the edges of their empires and beyond, provides a unique perspective on their political and cultural values and philosophy, as well as demonstrating their mathematical and scientific expertise. Measuring and Mapping Space explores these concepts in Greek and Roman societies by investigating how they perceived and represented geographic knowledge of the both known and unknown areas of their world. This exhibition continues ISAW’s innovative approach to the ancient world with a selection of objects that help viewers understand how Greek and Roman conceptions of the world were reflected in and defined by how it was presented in globes, maps, and other tools of navigation and representation. A digital component of the exhibition—accessible both in the gallery space itself and on the world wide web—extends the show’s reach to embrace continuing scholarly engagement with geographical aspects of Antiquity.

Our modern knowledge of ancient cartography relies almost exclusively on written sources. Despite the paucity of ancient artifacts, it is clear that Greeks and Romans applied topographical studies to the mapping of land and sea routes, to the implementation of an accurate system of recording public and private lands, and to promoting specific political agendas. In all these instances, the resulting representations of places presented the viewer with a distorted and schematized version of geographic and topographic elements, transforming those regions both on a conceptual and on a physical level. In Measuring and Mapping Space, the public is introduced to ancient cartography and geographic knowledge through manuscripts, incunabula, and early printed books written in the 15th and 16th centuries, a moment of revival of ancient knowledge that coincided with intense contemporary interest in exploration beyond Europe. The vast amount of information on geographic places, cartographic techniques and ethnographic accounts available in the rediscovered Greco-Roman texts influenced Renaissance cosmographers and cartographers who turned primarily to these sources as the main reference tools for their work.

In the exhibition, artifacts and manuscripts illustrate the ways in which space was conceptualized, not only through topography and cartography, but also according to non-geographical elements such as strategy and tactics. Indeed, official propaganda during the Roman imperial period consistently boosted the emperors’ agendas by performing acts of ‘imaginative geography’, out-and-out manipulations of known geographic facts that contributed to the creation of ever shifting social, ethnic, political, and cultural boundaries.

In addition to measuring, drawing and manipulating their known world, Greeks and Romans developed a flourishing literature of geographic mirabilia, in part inspired by the perceived secluded nature of their oikoumene. These texts, which had a wide impact on the shared geographic knowledge of individuals of all social categories, paired the knowledge of actual territories with hypothetical constructions of what existed beyond ancient ken, drawing both on actual facts from exploration and trade as well as pure fabrication. The objects on display show how geographical remoteness translated into projections of mythical and semi-mythical societies outside their controllable universe, ranging from the bizarre to the utopian.

An integral part of the exhibition is the digital compendium designed by ISAW’s Department of Digital Programs (http://isaw.nyu.edu/exhibitions/space/index.html). Available online and in the gallery space, this innovative and highly interactive website allows visitors to explore how modern technologies improve geographic information about the ancient world and promote collaborative projects aimed at the development of historical geography.

Upcoming Exhibition
Masters of Fire: The Copper Age in the Holy Land
February 13, 2014 - June 8, 2014

Masters of Fire: The Copper Age in the Holy Land focuses on the metallurgical revolution that occurred during the Chalcolithic period (4500-3500 BCE) in the Southern Levant when metallurgists first used the lost wax casting technique, resulting in the creation of some of the most sophisticated copper objects from all of the Ancient Near East. In addition to these extraordinary metal objects, the Chalcolithic material record includes zoomorphic and anthropomorphic ossuaries, human statuettes in a variety of forms and media, and some of the earliest preserved textiles. ISAW’s exhibition will present objects from all of these categories, providing its audience with a comprehensive view of this seminal period in Ancient Near Eastern history.
RESEARCH & TEACHING

Tracing Nomadism’s Development in Iran
D.T. Potts

One of the leitmotifs of Near Eastern archaeology over the past few decades has been nomadism. This has cropped up in many different contexts, from the Negev to the Iranian Plateau, and in many different time periods. The sub-text to much of what has been written is essentially that we, as archaeologists, were too pre-occupied with excavating great monuments and cities to concern ourselves with the allegedly large number of often undocumented, hence invisible, nomads who also contributed their share — through livestock and secondary products like milk or wool — to the rise of complex civilizations. Had we been more observant, we would have realized this long ago. Even though nomads are notoriously difficult to detect in the archaeological record, it is not because they didn’t exist. They just didn’t leave palpable traces. Even when physical, archaeological evidence of their presence cannot be adduced, we must have faith in their existence, in all periods from the Chalcolithic (some would say the Neolithic) onwards, despite the fact that science is not normally associated with acts of faith.

In my own case, I came to this topic through my work in the Mamasani region of western Fars province (Iran), an area considered by some scholars unsuited to sedentary settlement. Surveys in the valleys between Kazerun and Gachsaran brought to light numerous mound sites, many of them with long histories of occupation, sometimes spanning 6,000 years. These were the sedentary villages of settled farming communities, not the remains of nomads. This prompted me, about five years ago, to undertake an investigation into the entire history of nomadism in Iran, from its earliest manifestations to the modern era. Why I felt compelled to follow the story of nomadism in Iran right up to the present day is easily explained. Not a few archaeologists have written, with great vehemence, about the fact that, in their opinion, there is no reason to believe that the behavior and lifeways of nomads of the modern day differed markedly from those of the prehistoric past. Therefore, insights drawn from ethnographic studies of current or recent nomadic groups in Iran, like the Qashqa’i or Bakhtiyari, ought to provide keys to understanding ancient nomadism.

The result of my investigations have now been compiled into a book, finished last semester at ISAW, entitled Nomadism in Iran: From Antiquity to the Modern Era, which will be published next year by Oxford University Press. The book is anything but concordant with prevailing views, at least as far as Iran is concerned. My reading suggests that the ‘evidence’ of prehistoric nomadism is flimsy, not to say non-existent. Sherd scatters on hillsides, shallow sites (which often end up having meters of deposit), locations in areas today frequented by nomads — all of these have been cited as ‘evidence’. My contention is that, far from representing evidence of nomadism, this sort of material more likely reflects traces of herders who were themselves members of sedentary village communities. Herds and flocks of goat and sheep have been kept in villages all over Iran for many millennia, but the standard pattern of grazing has dictated that only a few members of each community, shepherds and herdsmen accompanied their herds and flocks on migration, to higher elevations with cooler temperatures in the summer, and to lower elevations with warmer temperatures in the winter. This has nothing to do with the more extensive sort of nomadism associated with the Bakhtiyari and Qashqa’i of recent centuries. Herodotus distinguished between Persian tribes he considered sedentary agriculturalists and those he called nomads, and references to ‘kurus’, a generic term for herders, became increasingly common in the Sassanian and early Islamic era. It was not, however, until the eleventh century AD, when Turkmen tribes entered Iran from the north, leading to the establishment of the Saljuq dynasty, that nomadism on a large scale came to Iran. This trend increased markedly with the Mongol invasion, and really accelerated from 1500 onwards when thousands of Turkmen rallied behind Shah Isma’Il, founder of the Safavid dynasty, and eventually conquered all of Iran. These Turkmen, whose ancestors had originated in Central Asia, in fact moved into Iran from Turkey and northern Syria. They were deployed in many different parts of the region, assigned pasture and moved (deported) to the northeastern frontier where they formed a bulwark against potential invasion by the Uzbeks. By the nineteenth century Western travellers estimated that no less than half of Iran’s population was nomadic. And when archaeologists began to pay attention to Iranian nomads in the mid- to late-twentieth century, they assumed these groups had always been where they then were, had always lived as they then lived, and completely ignored both the background of their arrival, and the vicissitudes they had undergone in the twentieth century — forced sedentarization, mandatory schooling, increasing production for the market, altered migration routes due to the loss of their former grazing lands at the hands of the government, and the list goes on. Nomadism in Iran has a long, varied and fascinating history, but it is not an organic development, an integral part of Iranian prehistory prior to the first millennium BC, when Herodotus first wrote of Persian nomadic tribes.

Epigraphic Survey of the Mardin Region, Southeast Turkey
Robert Huyland

The limestone mountain range in southeast Turkey that lies immediately to the east of the upper reaches of the River Tigris has a history stretching back millennia. The Assyrians called it Kashier and frequently fought for control of it with the Mittani, Hurrians and sundry Aramaean tribes in the late second and early first millennium BC.

Moving on a few centuries we find it still a contested land, coveted by the Roman and Persian empires. It is a harsh but beautiful place and this, plus the degree of protection afforded by its elevation (900-1,400 meters), enticed considerable numbers of Christian solitaries to make it their home. Once they had vanquished the demons said to live there and won over its natives to the virtues of the faith, the mountain range, now known as Tur ‘Abdin (“Mountain of the Worshippers”), became one of the foremost centers of Christian monasticism.

Still today it shelters a few functioning monasteries, and in its heyday there were said to have been thousands of monks, whether in caves or convents. These holy men coexisted with peasants and nomadic pastoralists, some of whom occasionally founded dynasties, such as the Marwanid Kurds (990-1085) based at Diyabakir and the Artukid Turkmen at Mardin (1106-1409).

All these different peoples have left mementos of their stay in the form of inscriptions on stone.

Chief of the Sagwand “Sartip Khan Tipa,” by C.J. Edmonds, 1917-1918; courtesy Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers

Shahsevan chiefs and tribesmen, by Morgan Philips Price, 1912; courtesy Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers
The Turkish authorities had cleared one of the outcrops.

Once they ceased to be useful as quarries they became common to add vaulted chambers to the ceiling or walls a message in plaster. The messages are in Arabic or Syriac or both, and sometimes a note about some local event before giving a valediction. They are simple texts, but give us a little window onto the life of this rural community over the past millennium.

Settlements in the Shadow of Fortresses in Azerbaijan

Emily Hammer
Visiting Assistant Professor at ISAW

In the Late Bronze Age (1500-1150 BC) and Iron Age (1150 BC-AD 300), stone fortresses dotted hilltops and rock outcrops in the highlands of eastern Turkey, northwestern Iran, and the south Caucasus (modern Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia). Fortresses are frequently the most highly visible ruins of any ancient period in this region and are indicative of the first emergence of territorial polities. Large populations living in agricultural plains below fortresses would have been needed to provide the labor necessary to construct and maintain them. However, almost all archaeological work in the region has focused on excavation of elite and administrative areas within the fortresses themselves. Little is known about the domestic settlements that must have been associated with these fortresses or their inhabitants.

Who were the people that lived in the shadows of fortresses? In particular, were they sedentary agriculturalists, as archaeologists have long assumed, or were they seasonally mobile pastoralists? What was the political relationship between these people and elites residing within the fortress walls? These are the questions that drive my current fieldwork in Nakhchivan, Azerbaijan, which is an outgrowth of my previous research on mobile pastoralists in southeastern Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. Nakhchivan (Naxçıvan), a small, semi-autonomous exclave of the Republic of Azerbaijan located between Armenia and Iran, is one of the least archaeologically explored areas of the Middle East and South Caucasus regions. Over two summers (2012, 2013), the fieldwork I have conducted there has revealed a multiple fortress-settlement complex that offers the opportunity to examine ancient fortress communities. Our team has shown that the dominant fortress on the plain was part of a settlement complex consisting of two fortresses and a domestic settlement, all of which may have been surrounded by a wall enclosing at least 1,210 acres. The size of the enclosed area is particularly significant: in the South Caucasus, settlements of pre-Medieval periods rarely encompass more than 25 acres, including their fortification walls.

In order to find the settlement complex and identify the domestic areas in the shadows of the two fortresses (Oğlanqala and Qızqala, meaning “boy’s castle” and “maiden’s castle” in Azerbaijani) our team had to use various survey methods. Some features, such as parts of the surrounding wall, can be identified by carefully examining high-resolution satellite imagery. We frequently use both modern color imagery from Google Earth as well as old black and white satellite imagery from the 1960s and 1970s, which shows some features that have been destroyed since that time. Settlements associated with fortresses are most likely to lie in the valleys or plains below them, but these areas have also been transformed in recent decades by Soviet “land amelioration” programs and decades of mechanized agriculture. Sometimes this transformation is so complete that settlement areas can only be found by mapping the distribution of pottery sherds on the ground surface in fallow fields and along irrigation canals. The large settlement between Oğlanqala and Qızqala was partially visible to us because it had been transected by a ditch dug adjacent to a modern irrigation canal and because portions of the settlement area had been destroyed by bulldozer activity in an adjacent gravel quarry. A large part of our fieldwork in 2013 involved documenting the features (walls, floors, and pits) that are visible in the stratigraphy exposed by the ditch and the bulldozer cuts, collecting pottery that has eroded out of this area, and taking samples for carbon-14 dating. On the basis of our work thus far, we can already say that the settlement below Oğlanqala and Qızqala was inhabited for at least 7,000 years and that the site in that period of time accumulated at least 11 meters of cultural stratigraphy. The bulldozers and ditch have undoubtedly destroyed one of the best-preserved portions of this important settlement. However, this destruction also allowed us to collect an enormous amount of information about the size, character, and chronology of the site in the span of only a few weeks.

Our work thus far only represents the first of many steps towards answering our research questions. In the coming years, my collaborators, Lauren Ristvet (University of Pennsylvania) and Hilary Gopnik (Emory University), and I plan to carry out a research program focused on understanding the identity and subsistence strategies of the people living in the settlement complex as well as their regional trade connections and political relationship with elites living within the fortress walls. We have the additional goal of encouraging gender diversity within the local academic community by recruiting female Azerbaijani and American graduate students to join our team.

Field team documenting walls visible in the ditch that transects the settlement below Qızqala fortress. Left to right: Veli Baxşalıyev, Emily Hammer, Hilary Gopnik, Jennifer Sweida, Nilüfer Agayeva. Photo by Lara Fabian, July 2013.
The cultures of ancient Mesopotamia and surrounding regions are often designated, in the West at least, as the “cradle of civilization.” Such generalizations may seem attractive, but they often distract us from the complexities of history and obscure the differences between ancient cultures. The two major cultures of the region, Egypt and Mesopotamia, followed very different developmental paths with relatively little mutual influence and many of the resemblances that moderns perceive resulted from the use of similar technologies and not from the diffusion of ideas. The underpinnings of Mesopotamian culture were developed in the fourth and third millennia BCE, and this is relatively late in view of the antiquity of human occupation of the Near East. These foundations are often labeled as “Sumerian” but this ethno-linguistic term has become suspect of late. This lecture will explore “Sumerian” but this ethno-linguistic term has certain aspects of these “Sumerian” foundations, from politics to language and literature and offer new perspectives on the development of heterogeneous early Mesopotamian civilizations.

About the Speaker: Piotr Michalowski is the George G. Cameron Professor of Ancient Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

November 7, 2013

Additional funding provided by The Evelyn Sharp Foundation and the Leon Levy Foundation.

South Caucasus Colloquium
Organized by Karen Rubinson, ISAW Research Associate
December 14, 2013

Now in its second year, this colloquium brings together local scholars with widely varied interests in the ancient South Caucasus in order to share updates on current research and to consider on-going and one-time activities that will further the study and knowledge of the region through the synergy of the group. The meeting is by invitation only.

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isaw.nyu.edu/events

November 7

Seventh Annual Leon Levy Lecture
sponsored by The Peter Jay Sharp Foundation
Historical Perspectives on Sumerian Vistas
Piotr Michalowski, University of Michigan
*Registration required at isaw@nyu.edu
ISAW.NYU.EDU

ISAW’s website provides information on our public lectures and exhibits, our academic courses, our digital and library resources and projects, and our people. Visit our news blog for updates on ISAW projects or subscribe to our mailing list and receive news and event reminders delivered directly to your email.

ABOUT ISAW

The creation of the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World (ISAW) at New York University had its roots in the passion of Shelby White and Leon Levy for the art and history of the ancient world, which led them to envision an institute that would encourage the study of the economic, religious, political, and cultural connections among ancient civilizations across geographic, chronological, and disciplinary boundaries.

The Institute, established in 2006, is an independent center for scholarly research and graduate education.